Jefferson County Waterway and Navigation

Sabine-Neches Waterway Channel Improvement Projects

US Army Corps of Engineers
Galveston District

Project Background

In 1997, the U.S. Senate authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin investigating the feasibility of modifying the channels serving the ports of Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange, Texas, in the interests of commercial navigation.

The Corps of Engineers completed a Reconnaissance Study in 1998 concluding that the benefits of channel improvements, including transportation cost savings, would be at least 1.2 times greater than the project cost, estimated at $260 million.

On March 6, 2000, the Jefferson County Navigation District and the Corps signed a Feasibility Cost Share Agreement and began the next step in project evaluation – the Feasibility Study. This phase will take approximately 54 months and will be equally funded by the Jefferson County Waterway and Navigation District and the Corps of Engineers. The resulting feasibility report will include an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

A series of Interagency Coordination meetings is being held with state and federal regulatory agencies to seek guidance on resource issues during the Feasibility Study.

For additional information, contact Lizette Richardson (Project Manager) at (409) 766-3123 or the USACE Public Affairs Office at (409) 766-3004.

Elements of Proposed Project

Proposed elements to be studied include:

1. Deepening the waterway from the Gulf to the Port of Beaumont to improve transportation efficiency.
2. Widening the Neches River Channel and the Sabine-Neches Canal to improve operating efficiency and navigation safety.

Proposed Channel Improvement Project

Alternatives Under Evaluation

- Deepen the entire Sabine-Neches Waterway from Gulf to the Port of Beaumont. The proposed channel depths to be evaluated are 45 feet, 48 feet, and 50 feet.
- Selective widening of the Neches River Channel and the Sabine-Neches Canal to accommodate two-way traffic.
- Various combinations of selective widening and turning basins with each of the above depths.

Issues Identified for Investigation

The goal of the Feasibility Study is to identify the plan that maximizes the Federal and non-Federal investments and to recommend for construction the plan that best meets the community goals for economic development and environmental well-being.

Among issues that will be addressed in the Feasibility Study and EIS in consultation with regulatory agencies and the public are the following:

- Channel Design Optimization Analysis
- Ship Simulator Study
- Shoreline Erosion Assessment
- Dredging Quantity Estimates
- Maintenance Shoaling Patterns and Rates
- Geotechnical Investigations for Levee Stability
- 50-Year Dredge Material Placement Plan
- Beneficial Uses of Dredged Material
- Pipeline Relocation Requirements
- Hydrodynamic and Salinity Modeling
- Biological Resources
- Mitigation Alternatives
- Ecosystem Restoration Planning
- Water and Sediment Quality
- Endangered Species
- Cumulative Impacts
- Vessel Effects
- Cultural and Historical Properties

Project Timeline